

Gomte d'Erlon's infantry meanwhile, advanced beyond La Haye Sainte, which at this time they did not attack. As the French drew near a Belgian brigade of infantry stationed in front fell back in confusion, and the French columns instantly occupied the height. Sir Thomas Picton, perceiving this, immediately moved up General Pack's brigade, and opened a fire upon the French columns as they took possession of the vantage-ground they had just gained. Without waiting for the English charge of bayonets the French infantry began to hesitate, when the latter approached within thirty yards. At this moment Ponsonby's brigade of heavy dragoons wheeling round the infantry, took the French in flank. An immediate panic spread amongst them, and throwing down their arms they ran away in all directions to avoid the sabres of the cavalry. Many were killed, and an eagle with 2000 prisoners taken. But the cavalry pursued their success too far; they were fired upon by another column, and being at the same time attacked by a fresh body of French cavalry, *they were in turn driven back with much loss.

General Ponsonby, who commanded the heavy dragoons, and Sir Thomas Picton, who led on his division to repel this attack, were both killed.¹

¹ The following particulars connected with the death of Sir Thomas Picton will be read with especial interest: — "The French columns were marching close up to the hedge, the English advanced to meet them, and the muzzles of their muskets almost touched. Picton ordered Sir James Kempt's brigade forward; they bounded over the hedge, and were received with a murderous volley. A frightful struggle then ensued; the English rushed with fury upon their opponents, not stopping to load, but trusting solely to the bayonet to do its deadly work. The French fire had, however, fearfully thinned this first line, and they were fighting at least six to one. Picton therefore ordered General Pack's brigade to advance. With the exhilarating cry of 'Charge! Hurra!' he placed himself at their head, and led them forward. They returned his cheer as they followed him with a cool determination, which, in the words of the Spanish chief Alava, *appalled the enemy."

"The General kept at the head of the line, stimulating it by his own example. According to the Duke of Wellington's despatch, 'this was one of the most serious attacks made by the enemy on our position. To defeat it was therefore of vital importance to the success of the day. Picton knew this, and doubtless felt that his own presence would tend greatly to inspire his men with confidence. He was looking along his gallant line, waving his sword, when a ball struck him on the temple, and he fell back upon his horse —dead. Captain Tyler, seeing him fall, immediately dismounted and ran to his assistance; with the aid of a soldier he lifted him off his horse: but all assistance was vain — his noble spirit had fled.'

"The rush of war passed on, the contending hosts had met, and none